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Federal City College (FCC) in Washington, D.C., the youngest land-grant college in the nation, had an auspicious beginning. It was generously endowed, enthusiastically received, enjoyed enlightened leadership, a dedicated faculty, an open admission policy, and an innovative curriculum in which most courses were interdisciplinary, problem-oriented and related to human and urban needs. The students, mostly freshmen, are predominantly black Washingtonians. The curriculum, however, has not served the students well and has required revision; many facilities are not yet fully operative; and the faculty is, at times, irresponsible and uncooperative in implementing the ex"erimental academic program. Race has been the greatest problem and moderates have passively allowed black separatists and their white supporters to dominate the faculty. Three solutions are (1) to remain open and responsive to the city and its racial frustrations (2) to use reason not dogma within the college (3) to learn from the cries for black dignity to give attention to the enormous contributions of black men throughout history. If it can survive the birth pains of divisiveness, FCC should become a major resource center (and catalyst for other universities) for black studies. (JS)

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Talk for the 11:00 A.M. Tuesday, November 12, 1968
General Meeting of the National Association of State
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As a veteran English teacher I have always encouraged my writing students to write about something they know well. Therefore, I shall try to follow my own advice now. I don't know enough in depth about predominantly negro colleges and universities to talk precisely and accurately about them as I was first asked to do for this session. I do know a good deal, however, about one exciting, new public college with a predominantly urban and black constituency to talk accurately about its history and its hopes, its policies and practices, its problems and its future prospects. Moreover, I think it very important to talk about the infancy of this youngest land grant college, this oldest perhaps of a new group of urban grant colleges. For this account may well be instructive to other college administrators who like us at Federal City College still believe that higher education can help to cure the cancer that is destroying our urban areas, that higher education can bring reason and knowledge to control passion and ignorance and to tame the savagery of man, and also unify our broken nation to make the two one.

Everyone, as the old saying goes, loves a lover and naturally most of us love babies. So almost everyone in Washington was delighted at the birth of the baby public college. This baby came very late in life to the District and was all the more welcome for that fact. Long desired it was born scores of years after most American citizens had comprehensive and inexpensive public higher education available to them. A report from a blue ribbon committee established by President Kennedy in 1962 to study higher education in the District led to the Morse-Green Bill supported manfully by Mr. Nelson in November 1966, to the establishment of a board of higher education in the winter of 1967, the recruitment of an administration in late 1967, then the development of faculty, staff and curriculum in this present year until classes started on September 9, 1968.

Congress was generous, the general public enthusiastic, all seemed determined almost in the utopian terms of Marlowe's Dr. Faustus to dream to "fill this public school with silk." The college would offer a liberal arts centered AA degree, a BA in standard liberal arts subjects with a special responsibility for teacher education and other major professional disciplines, and when willing and able the school was to offer masters' degrees; its faculty would enjoy the best basic salaries and fringe benefits in the District, keyed to the A-level of the AAUP 1967 scale. The charter group under the leadership of Dr. Frank Farner, formerly associate dean of the University of Oregon's graduate school, dreamed and planned in the most innovative fashion. An open door admission's policy would offer maximum opportunity to the eager; small classes, a modern flexible skills development center, a happy proportion of student counselors, a faculty of dedicated teachers drawn from all over the country, and a highly motivating curriculum would help students to maximum achievement. Instead of technically limited and routine freshman courses, a core curriculum was fashioned to stress the topical, the urban, the permanently relevant, the concrete and the philosophical to allure the student to the more recondite

academic joys of the distant and the abstract. Instead of freshman English, there would be reading, writing and speaking discipline in all courses and in small fifteen-man freshman seminars; instead of hasty "Cook's Tours" of Western culture and history, the student would select an interdisciplinary humanities course in the theory of revolutions, in the concepts of the good life, or in the search for identity. The social scientists have eschewed economics I and sociology I for courses in community development, urban problems or group conflict taught by interdisciplinary teams. Instead of digesting large draughts of scientific exposition laced with experiments whose results had long since been well known to millions of other college students, our freshmen would live in the labs and start with simple studies of everyday phenomena to lead to recognition of scientific laws. They would themselves take small slices of the envelope which is their environment and ask the questions whose answers would come from actually following the logic of empirical inquiry according to the inductive method.

Meanwhile a media center would bring the student into McCluhan's world of multisensory impression as well as preserve the joys of the linear verbal world by providing each student with a fifty-book basic paperback library of his own. Wherever possible, practica in the city would supplement bookish information and the vast cultural, intellectual and political resources of Washington would bring the city reciprocally into the classroom. From the beginning, distinguished national educators like Riesman of Harvard, Zacharias of M.I.T., and Tax of Chicago benevolently offered imaginative and practical suggestions. By June, the Federal City College was established as the Land Grant College of the District with a cooperating partner in the Washington Technical Institute, summoned to bring the beauty and the truth, the knowledge and the technical expertise of the college to bear on manpower development, language training, and human services for the city on the city's terms and at the city's request. As the symbol of its involvement with the whole city, the college established its temporary quarters right on the city sidewalks, the modest temporary building at 425 Second Street, N. W. Its permanent sites would be in the decaying, inner city neighborhood of Mt. Vernon Square with a complementary site at Fort Lincoln, the location of a multiracial, multiclass model city blessed by the President and his planners. The polity of the school was always open and democratic. Citizens were involved in site selection; faculty, staff and students as much as possible worked together in keeping with President Farner's faith in participatory democracy.

Democratic idealism brightened these golden days. A public college concerned for a troubled city would be an instrument to shape a more truly open society, enhance the knowledge and dignity of all men, black as well as white. Healing the wounds of interracial strife by practicing social democracy within and beyond its walls, Federal City College would be a catalyst to urban renewal and the midwife of a more truly pluralistic America.

This is the early history and the young hope of this college. All wished it well, and all were aware of what was tritely but truly called "A Great Challenge." Not all the buds of March have blossomed. Many were "no sooner blown than blasted." All have had to weather biting winds even before the waning light of this bleak November. But as one of our senior professors, disappointed in much that we have done, told me last week, the students alone

have exceeded his best expectations. They number 2,000, average 21 years old, are predominantly freshman. True to Washington, 94% of them are black; better than 55% of them are women; 40% of them are night students. A few of them are dedicated black nationalists; most of them are serious and earnest, sophisticated in the practical wisdom of the city, better at speech than at writing or mathematics, but willing to work hard to move upward in a society which has largely obscured their sights, limited their aspirations and dulled for them the American dream of affluence and dignity.

Our innovative curriculum does not necessarily serve them well whatever its intrinsic worth. If it delighted the faculty planners, it has largely confused the students. It is unrealistic to expect a quickly gathered staff to develop the understanding necessary to become functioning teaching teams. Team work among individualistic academicians, as we all know, is as difficult as subtle intellectual syntheses of fact and concept are for students who still need much work on reading, writing and arithmetic. Our laboratories are not ready for the laboratory science core course; the library and media center are not yet fully operative. A curriculum depending upon canned lectures would itself have been in trouble; ours has been and is. An agonizing reappraisal is leading us to give greater attention to systematic development of academic skills, somewhat more standard disciplinary courses which the faculty can really teach competently. One can lead a faculty toward a core curriculum but one can't make them teach it well. Curricular imagination is not dead, however, for we shall do significant new things in black studies, in American culture and in comparative politics; stress innovation in content and pedagogy rather than in curricular design alone. Yet outside our almost psychedelically bright hued building our community education program is enormously successful in providing language training for the Spanish and the negro ghettos, in cooperation with the oral history sponsored by the Anacostia branch of the Smithsonian Institution, in offering training to head-start personnel, supervising the "go" program and finding that the inner city does welcome a college that listens to it, accepts it, and works with it. Our polity, however, has not been altogether successful. Permissiveness can lead to abusive as well as wise use of freedom. Even dedicated, young, innovative faculty are as subject to laziness, greed, pride and prejudice as professors in routine schools. Faculty are always faculty and usually as conservative about their own domain as they tend to be liberal about other people's business. Sometimes almost discouraged we have been inclined to suggest if you are thinking of starting a new school, don't. But if you must, establish your procedures, develop your goals and your curriculum first, then recruit a faculty and staff who can conscientiously implement the given philosophy and practices.

Our profoundest problem, however, has not been that of curriculum or of organization. Our biggest problem is the great problem of this nation, race. Racial tension, racial suspicion, and racial polarization have almost blasted our lovely spring buds. We have not yet developed an open community of mutual respect. Some of our counter-punching blacks are blatantly and boisterously separatist and some of our whites are too missionary minded, proud and so guilt written that they have lost common sense in their pusillanimous response to unjust black pressures. Instead of being the leaven in the American interracial lump we have become lumpish, more the microcosm of an unhappy macrocosm than heralds of a better one world. Our meetings display passion quite as much

as reason, intimidation rather than discussion. The black or white moderates shocked at the flight of sweet reason are supine while the well disciplined and intense cadre of black separatists neglect academic principles for revolutionary ends. The new racists overcome those who believe in an open rather than a closed society, a pluralistic rather than a monolithic society. The public school to be "filled with silk" has become a darkling plain swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight.

As Yeats wrote with great vision:

> Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
> Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
> The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
> The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
> The best lack all conviction, while the worst
> Are full of passionate intensity.

What do we do? I have three suggestions coming out of difficult experience.

I. We must stay open to the city and the exasperated black and meet problems head on with hard reason, with calm resolve and with thick skins. Our cloisters are exposed, our ivy is stripped away. Indeed, we must stop praising the "fugitive cloistered virture, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees its adversary but slinks out of the race where that immortal garland is to be run for not without dust and heat." So we cannot sequester ourselves from the stench and the volcanic frustrations and hatred which the denial of the American dream of equality for all men has aroused.

II. To meet the city we must be faithful with greater resolve than ever to do "our thing." Our thing is to be as zealous in our insistance upon open discussion as are those who would deny it. Those who deny a hearing to their fellows have no right to stay in the academic community. We must attack simple answers given for complex problems and be as courageous toward the simplistic cleavers as we are to the simplistic Wallaces. We need to develop a community of open-minded scholars, not a university haven and rabbit warren for individualists who would eat from the common academic dish but deny open inquiry and expression of contrary views. These are the canon laws of our academic foundation. Where there is passion, let us bring reason; where there is prejudice, let us bring open-mindedness; where there is provincialism, be it black or white, let us bring cosmopolitanism; where there is a thrust for a closed society, let us fight increasingly for the open society. For the open society is the very nature of the Christian, democratic and academic dream, the city of God and the city of men who know themselves to be brothers.

III. Let us bring to full growth the good seeds of the black revolution which can really help us to the one society which is more comprehensive than anything which our provincial white Western European culture could ever by itself bring into being for all mankind. We need to know that our colleges have regularly asked black students to come as

poor relatives to a white feast to gain nourishment from a curriculum which suggests that all the goodies come from an area bounded by the Ionian Sea and the Sahara. In this narrow acceptance of a favorable Greek press on the Persian wars, the Persians and, by easy over-generalization, all Asiatics are tabbed as mindless hordes led by jewel-bedecked potentates who have no respect for individuals. Yet if we were to know more about Asia or even more about Persia, we would realize that Plato is a footnote to Hinduism and that the religion of the Medo-Persian culture was far superior to that of the Olympian Pantheon and the benevolence of Persian imperialism far more considerable of the cultural autonomy of its subjects than that of Greeks, be they Spartans or Athenians. So ancient Egypt has been studied as though it were a lily white culture and its splendid and sophisticated medicine, engineering, and soteriology completely separate from black Africa, always understood to be jungle or Savannahs where from the beginning of time naked natives shrink each other's heads and par-boil skinny wasp missionaries in iron pots. Actually Egypt, the mother of Greek learning as well as Greek esoterica, has probably always had a considerable negro mixture, a mixture that extends into the Arabic Peninsula and the levant from which our mathematical and linguistic symbols and our great religions have sprung. Let us listen then to the loud cries of our black chauvinists are are really attacking white chauvinism which had denied respect to the full record of contributions of American blacks to America, which doesn't know of a Howard professor's contribution to blood chemistry, that of Dr. Charles Drew which led to the perfection of preservation of blood plasma which was ironically administrated in a segregated way in the last war. Our college shall be a great center of black documents, black research, black bibliography and black curriculum where the contributions of Asia and Africa, the Caribbean and South America are taken into our curriculum so that we can really move from provincialism to cosmopolitanism and from chauvinism to brotherhood. Let us listen seriously to the cries for black dignity. The negro who has been the lamb is now the tiger and both have been symbols of Christ. The black who hated his black ancestry and glorified only his white ancestry was not a full man; he was a sick man. If cultural white imperialism is waning, let us rejoice in a world where a cracking of the soil suggests there are new sprouts growing where more men in our days than for centuries are asking for dignity. How good it is that black men, yellow men, and brown men now dare to walk as tall men. Let the university be open to this as well as to the European culture which alone it has tended to glorify. Perhaps the Federal City College, if it can survive its birth pains of divisiveness, can bring the antithesis of black to bear against the white thesis of white and inaugurate the syntheses of a more comprehensive curriculum and human understanding. Certainly we know now that the fire is not next time; it is now and yet may it not be that we shall all be refined in the fire of affliction. This new and struggling school looks forward to its new permanent site at Mt. Vernon Square in an area blackened by the fires of the April riot. May it not perhaps find that these were the ashes of the Phoenix, the Phoenix like the Christ it symbolized which rises renewed with healing in its wings.